

The United Endeavor

News from United Evangelical Church

Feb/Mar 2008

Pastor's Message



The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is

not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you...' Matthew 28:5-7

Easter is the absolute earliest it can be this year. As we look to February and March, we find them filled with Lenten, Holy Week, and Easter services. It feels a little odd when Easter happens before the winter weather breaks. It is easier to believe in resurrection when we are surrounded by all the signs of new life which Spring brings.

This makes me think how odd it must have been for the women who found Jesus tomb empty. Nothing was how it was supposed to be. How hard it must have been for them to believe.

In our dinner groups we have begun to talk about what it is to be people who believe in the resurrection. At the first round of our

dinner meetings the following questions were discussed. If you are not able to attend, I encourage you to think about how you would answer these questions.

- ◆ What meaning has this church brought to you historically? What made it exciting to come to the church?
- ◆ What continues to be vital for you here at this church? Why do you come here every week versus not going or versus going somewhere else? What needs is this church meeting in your life, making it important to support with time and money?
- ◆ What would make this church a vital presence in this community? What is it that we have to offer to people moving into this community?

Two overall themes emerged in the responses to these questions from our meetings. The first was that this church brings a sense of belonging, a sense of family. The second was that it is important to belong to this church to be the bridge between the past and the future. When we stand between the past and the future we stand between memory and hope.

(cont'd on following page)

Church Council

Pastor's Message *(cont'd from page 1)*

This is where the women found themselves on the morning of the resurrection. Could they dare hope that what the angel was telling them was true? The women had a choice to make, as do we. Will we believe that Jesus is going before us, as he promised, to meet us at the place he is calling us as a church? Or will we remain at the tomb clinging to our memories? It is a choice that will require some soul searching on all our parts.

Lent is the season intended for this kind of soul searching. May we emerge on Easter morning as a people who understand the implications of believing in resurrection.

In Christ,
Rev. Cathy

“He has risen
from the dead ...”

Matthew 28:7, NIV



President's Message

Many times as I look back over the years, I reflect on significant events that have happened in my life and during my life. A few major events in my life are, of course, graduating from school, serving in the Navy, getting married, the births of my children, entering into my own business, the passing of my parents, retiring and so on. I believe that everyone can come up with a list of occurrences that are meaningful in their lives. It could be that looking back over one's life could be a sign of old age, especially when you have more than three quarters of a century to cogitate on. Some memorable events that have taken place during my life are the start and end of WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, assassination of President Kennedy, the appearance of television into our daily lives, the 9/11 attack & current Iraq war, the advent of the computer age, the vast changes in the world's transportation system and the many changes in our country's social structure. The observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on Jan 21st started me thinking of another event I vividly remember, The March on Washington in August, 1963 with more than 250,000 participants and Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Being originally from Washington, DC and seeing the whole event on TV has made it remain fresh in my mind, however, perhaps more than that, the "I Have a Dream" speech always resounds in my mind this time of year. I feel that event has had a large part in my thinking of the many inequalities in our society; educational, employment & social, particularly in 1963. Having a "dream" can often be the first step to reality.

(cont'd on following page)

Church Council

President's Message - (cont'd from previous page)

When we think of someone having a dream, we also may consider that they have a vision, hence the name of our Visioning Committee, the members who have been working this past year on our dreams or visions for the future of our church. We now have Visioning Groups, meeting monthly, led by the original members of the Visioning Committee. I believe we are now in a phase where our visions can move into becoming actualities. Often, I find myself thinking along these lines: How can we insure the future of our church and focus it in the direction God wants us to go? One way I know that works, at least it did for my business, is think of your dreams (visions) in terms of goals you need to accomplish in order to obtain the realization of your objectives. Know where you want to go and what steps are required in order to get there. In business it is frequently called a "Business Plan". It is with some of these thoughts, that for our first council meeting of this year, January 15th, I asked the church council group to think about and name some of our needs and goals for this year and future years. The session became a naming of material things that are seen as being required to keep our facility able to continue serving our congregation and community. We talked about developing an "Adopt a Project" list with fund amounts required to bring them about. Some things mentioned were:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (a) Get tower clock & bells functioning again | (b) Install a lighted programmable sign |
| (c) Purchase new ice making machine | (d) Replace/ repair church & office carpet |
| (e) Repair broken/cracked windows in bldg. | (f) Install pull down projector screen |
| (g) Obtain sound system for hearing impaired | (h) Have needed roof repairs done |
| (i) Remodel office with workspace counter | (j) Install chair lift from narthex to hall |
| (k) Print updated membership directory | (l) Get an elevator installed in school bldg |

While I was pleased with the participation and input from our little "brainstorming" session trying to focus on some of our visions & goals, I couldn't help but think that perhaps sometimes we spend an inordinate amount of time dealing with the churches physical needs at the sacrifice of the true function of what a church really should be, a gathering of people serving our Lord and providing a place to fulfill one's spiritual needs and commitments. Difficult, because as the President & Church Council we are charged with concerning ourselves with the churches financial health as well as the upkeep, maintenance and repair of our facility, which seems to require more and more attention as the years go by. In future meetings I plan to try to home in on what visions we have and goals we can set to successfully serve the spiritual and secular needs of people.

I have a dream too; my dream is that our church can be increasingly known as *The Church* where you can send your children and young people to learn about Jesus and Christian values and have fun as well. The same *The Church* also to be known as one where everyone is welcome and feels comfortable worshipping, learning and yes, questioning what being called a Christian is all about and share the good-fellowship we all enjoy.

With our dreams, visions, setting goals, diligent work and prayers, we can make amazing things happen.

Harvey

Church Council

THE UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BALTIMORE, MD

TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Revenue and Expenses 1/01/07 through 12/31/07

Revenue: Proceeds from Donations, Rent & Interest	\$ 179,547.00
Expenses: Operating Expenses	\$ 196,774.00
<u>School Building Conversion</u>	<u>2,045.00</u>
Total All Expenses	\$ 198,819.00
Amount under (deficit)	(\$19,272.00)

Operating, Investment & Endowment Funds Balance 12/31/07

Operating Funds on Hand	\$ 68,142.00
Investment & Endowment Funds on Hand	<u>\$ 197,176.00</u>
Total All Funds	\$ 265,318.00

Stained Glass Window Report as of 12/31/07

Amount Received to Date	\$ 56,690.00
Committed Future Receipts	<u>\$ 1,500.00</u>
Total on Hand & Committed	\$ 58,190.00
Funds Paid for 10 Windows	<u>\$ 43,915.00</u>
Funds Available to Apply to Front Windows	\$ 14,275.00

Property Committee

Any concerns regarding the janitorial maintenance of the church or school building should be directed to Dale Sanders. With Dale acting as the liaison between the congregation and the custodian, any concerns can be quickly addressed.

Dale Sanders can be reached at 443-922-9470.



For by
GRACE
you have
been saved
through
FAITH ...
it is the gift
of **GOD ...**

Ephesians 2:8, NRSV

Church Holiday Schedule

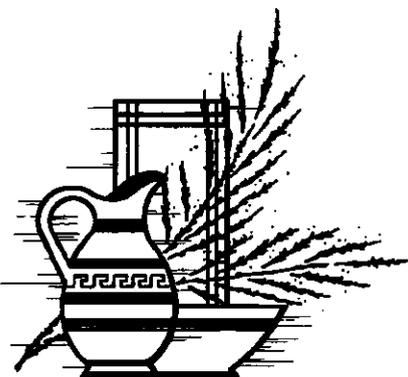


Soup on Wednesdays during Lent

No need to rush home for dinner before Lenten worship. Just drop by before services for a delicious, steaming bowl of soup in Friendship Hall.

Dinner is served from
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

All worshippers are welcome.



Lenten Worship Series 2008



"And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.'"
~ Mark 14:35-36

Lent is a time to prepare ourselves to enter into Jesus' passion. As Jesus faced his trial he turned to prayer. As we journey with Christ to the Cross this Lent we will turn our attention to the importance of prayer for our lives. Before each service, from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m., a simple meal of soup and bread will be provided. Come and fellowship and worship the One who prays for us.

Lenten Worship Schedule

Wed	Feb. 6 th	7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday
Wed	Feb. 13 th	7:30 pm	The Power of Prayer
Wed	Feb. 20 th	7:30 pm	The Purpose of Prayer
Wed	Feb. 27 th	7:30 pm	Impediments to Prayer
Wed	Mar. 5 th	7:30 pm	Expressions of Prayer
Wed	Mar. 12 th	7:30 pm	The One to Whom we Pray

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Wed	Mar 19th	8:00 p.m.	Last Supper Tableau
Thurs	Mar 20th	7:30 p.m.	Maundy Thursday
Fri	Mar 21st	9:00 a.m.	Good Friday
Sun	Mar 23rd	6:00 a.m. 9:15 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Easter Sunrise Service The Living Cross Easter Morning Service

Church Council

UEC "To Do" List

- Seek out suitable non-profit organizations to occupy school building
- Explore grant money and funding sources for school building conversion—submit applications
- Design and produce flyer for space available in the school building
- Clean up school building—sell or haul away items no longer needed
- Develop schedule for school building modification and renovation—design spaces
- Act as liaison person between Church and Nonprofit Center Network
- Attend Canton Community Association meetings and report back to Council
- Further develop and maintain church website
- Update church membership list—categories: active, inactive, shut-ins, friends
- Inventory all locks in buildings and match up with keys
- Change and maintain outside church and school building signs
- Find someone to repair cracked windows in Fellowship Hall & kitchen
- Check heating & A/C thermostats periodically for correct settings and programming
- Host weekly practice sessions for aspiring musicians and combos
- Disconnect, disassemble and clean ice making machine
- Do monthly walkthrough of buildings & make list of maintenance & repair items required
- Maintain flower pots in front of church—water, weed & clean weekly or more frequently
- Research and lead effort to update to working condition the tower clock and bells
- Paint and replace steel decorative trim on front doors of bell tower
- Seek & list ways congregation can attract and serve people in local community – implement
- Replace church sign's plastic windows—explore acquisition of affordable LED sign
- Seek and implement ways to prevent birds from roosting on church buildings
- Study feasibility and cost of installing elevator in school building—elevator company listing available

This is a list in process; please do not hesitate to offer suggestions, additions, comments & constructive criticism

Adopt-a-Project



Have you ever noticed the "Adopt-a-Highway" projects along the interstate? Well, here at UEC, we are thinking along the same lines.

Upcoming Endeavor issues will include a list of "Adopt-a-Project" opportunities in the church. Each "project" will be listed along with the approximate cost to complete. Perhaps you, as an individual, or as a family would consider "adopting" a project to support the care of your church. It is a great opportunity to see a tangible result of your generous donations.

It's a great way to stay involved with your church. Think about it!!

Thank You to George Swift



George Swift, our seminary intern, has left us due to a change in his educational plans. When you see George, please extend thanks to him for his kindness to all of us at UEC. As George said in one of his sermons, don the "Armor of Light" and go out into the world to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

Thank you, George for sharing your "Armor of Light" with us.

The Youth Booth



Attention All Youth – Ages 12 and up

Our Church Youth Group invites you and all your friends to come, hang out, have fun and live your faith.

Upcoming Youth Group meetings are listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
Feb. 10 th	12:30 pm	United Evangelical	Valentines for Shut-Ins
Feb. 24 th	12:30pm	Zion	Flower Sale Fundraiser planning
Mar. 9 th	TBA	TBA	Bowl-a-Thon
Mar. 30 th	Meeting pending		

Mission Moments

Mission Moments is a way of highlighting our congregation's connection to the wider church. Our church is a vital part of the United Church of Christ, and it is not alone! Each Mission Moment will help inform members of what they make possible through their gifts to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM).

Mission Moment

Helping with Healing

If you or your family has ever provided in-home health care for an elderly or sick relative, you know how difficult it can be and how much time and energy it requires. Adding to the burden can be the financial cost of necessary medical equipment, which is often expensive.

Some parish nurse programs in United Church of Christ congregations have found a way to help by loaning this equipment to families in need, free of charge. Equipment can include walkers, wheelchairs, canes, crutches and bathroom accessories such as hand rails and shower chairs. If your church has a wellness program, this might be a service to consider, or, if you already provide this service, don't forget to donate items to keep available equipment at the ready.

What a Christ-like gesture when we reach out to those in need of healing and help those who provide tender loving care. Jesus taught us love and compassion through his healing hands and heart. We pray for those gentle souls who reach out to the sick and the dying just as Christ taught us to do.

January 2008

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



God is still speaking,

Just What is OCWM?

Just what is it and how is it different from OGHS (One Great Hour of Sharing)?

OCWM **(Our Church's** **Wider Mission)**

Right now, Our Church's Wider Mission is bringing the UCC message to more and more people:

*No matter who you are
or where you are on
life's journey...you're
welcome here.*

Without OCWM, there would be no United Church of Christ. OCWM is who we are.

OGHS **(One Great Hour** **of Sharing)**

OGHS works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, emergency relief, and resettlement aid for refugees. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster response and relief.

Places to Go, People to See, Things to Do...

Ladies Organization Trips & Events

Upcoming Events



Arlene Pate 410-327-3211
Millie Wirsing 410-675-3904

April 5th Faith Church Oyster & Turkey Luncheon \$ 34.00
Leave UEC @ 10:00 a.m.
(Stop at McCutcheon's Jellies and Baugher's Produce)

Come join the Ladies Organization,
we would love to see you!!

New members are always welcome!

Dues are \$ 10.00 per year



Upcoming Ladies Organization Meetings
All Meetings Begin at 12 noon
(unless otherwise noted)

Feb. 6th Barbecue Luncheon \$6.00 per person
Mar. 5th Corned Beef & Cabbage Luncheon \$ 7.00 per person
Apr. 2nd Afternoon Tea 12:30 p.m.
\$ 10.00 per person
No Meeting

*Next issue of The Endeavor will list
May and June meeting dates.*

Important Notice—All trips MUST HAVE DEPOSIT TO HOLD SEATS

If you must cancel your seat you need to find someone to take your seat to receive your money back.

Persons to contact:

Arlene Pate 410-327-3211 or Millie Wirsing 410-675-3904

News & Notes

Earl's Place New Years Day 5 K Run



Congratulations to Calvin Gundlach and Dale & Eric Sanders for participating in the annual Earl's Place New Year's Day Resolution 5K Run in Baltimore! Hats off to Cathy Fifield and Lynn Sanders for cheering for our runners.

In a field of 358 participants:

Eric Sanders finished 58th with a time of 24:06

Calvin Gundlach finished 136th with a time of 28:24

Remember to thank Cal, Dale, Eric, Lynn & Cathy for their participation in this event on behalf of our church.

Thank you to all who participate and support Earl's Place throughout the year.

UEC February 2008 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
<p>3</p> <p><i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i></p> <p>Souper Bowl Sunday Youth Group Food Bank Donations</p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p>	4	5	<p>6</p> <p><i>Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)</i></p> <p>Ladies Org. Luncheon 12 noon</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Choir practice 7:30 p.m.</p>	8	9
<p>10</p> <p><i>1st Sunday of Lent</i></p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p> <p>12:30 p.m. Youth Group</p> <p>Confirmation Class 2:00 p.m.</p>	11	<p>12</p> <p>Church Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:30 p.m. "The Power of Prayer"</p>	<p>14</p> <p><i>Valentine's Day</i></p> <p>Choir practice 7:30 p.m.</p>	15	16
<p>17</p> <p><i>2nd Sunday of Lent</i></p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p> <p>Confirmation Class 2:00 p.m.</p>	<p>18</p> <p><i>President's Day</i></p>	<p>19</p> <p>Christian Education Meeting 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:30 p.m. "The Purpose of Prayer"</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Choir practice 7:30 p.m.</p>	22	23
<p>24</p> <p><i>3rd Sunday of Lent</i></p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p> <p>Confirmation Class 2:00 p.m.</p>	25	26	<p>27</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:30 p.m. "Impediments to Prayer"</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Choir Practice 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>29</p>	
<p>FEBRUARY</p>						

UEC March 2008 Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
<p>2</p> <p>4th Sunday of Lent</p> <p><i>One Great Hour of Sharing</i> special collection</p> <p>Communion Sunday</p> <p>Food Bank Donations</p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p> <p>Confirmation Class 2:00 p.m.</p>	3	4	<p>5</p> <p>Ladies Org. Luncheon 12 noon</p> <p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p> <p>Lenten Worship 7:30 p.m. "Expressions of Prayer"</p>	6	7	8
<p>9</p> <p>5th Sunday of Lent</p> <p><i>Daylight Savings Begins</i> 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p> <p>Confirmation Class 2:00 p.m.</p>	10	11	12	13	14	15
<p>16</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p>	17	18	19	20	21	22
			<p><i>The Lord's Supper</i> Tableau 8:00 p.m.</p>	<p><i>Maundy Thursday</i> 7:30 p.m. Worship Service</p>	<p><i>Good Friday</i> 9:00 a.m. Worship Service</p>	
Holy Week						
<p>23</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p> <p>6:00 a.m. Sunrise Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. The Living Cross</p> <p>10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p>	24	25	26	27	28	29
		<p>Canton Community Association Meeting 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Bible Study 10:00 a.m.</p>	<p>Choir practice 7:30 p.m.</p>		
<p>30</p> <p>8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship Service</p> <p>9:15 a.m. Bible Study</p>	31					

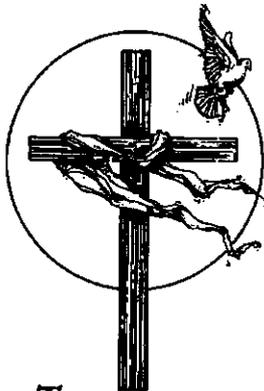
Lenten Prayer

Father of light,
in You is found no shadow of change but only
the fullness of life and limitless truth.

Open our hearts to the voice of Your Word
and free us from the original darkness
that shadows our vision.

Restore our sight that we may look upon Your
Son who calls us to repentance and a change of
heart, for he lives and reigns with You
for ever and ever.

International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)



***The Lord lift up
His countenance
upon you
and give you peace.***
-Numbers 6:26

United Evangelical Church

<u>Pastor</u>	Rev. Catherine J. Oatman cjoatman@msn.com cell phone: 410-428-1482
<u>Church Office</u>	410-276-0393
<u>e-mail:</u>	uecucc@verizon.net
<u>website:</u>	www.unitedevangelicalucc.org
<u>Hours</u>	Tuesday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<u>Secretary</u>	Tiffanie Dufour
<u>Custodian</u>	Paul Polasky
<u>Director of Music</u>	Robert Gundlach robert.gundlach@verizon.net
<u>Newsletter Editor</u>	Barbara Matthew barbmattthew@verizon.net

A "Hunger Site at the U.N" on the Internet

All you have to do is click a button and some-
where in the world some hungry person gets
a meal to eat at no cost to you. Corporate
sponsors pay for the food. Just go to the site
listed below and click.

No gimmicks, no tricks.

You are only allowed one click per day, so
spread the word to others.

The site is: www.hungersite.com



***Just a
Reminder...***

General Mills Boxtops for Education

Don't forget to bring in
your General Mills Box
tops for Education and
leave them in the dis-
play in the Narthex.

Special Events in February



Sunday School Lenten Mission

As a special Lenten Mission, the children of our Sunday School will be collecting money for Heifer International.

Heifer works to end hunger and poverty by increasing self-reliance through gifts of livestock and agricultural training.

The children's goal is to fill an ark, which is two of every animal that Heifer provides.

Every family and community that receives assistance promises to repay their living loan by donating one or more of their animal's offspring to another family in need. This practice of "**Passing on the Gift**" ensures project sustainability, develops community and enhances self-esteem by allowing project partners to become donors.

This is Heifer's **sustainable approach** to ending hunger and poverty – one family, one animal at a time. It's not temporary relief. It's not a handout. It's securing a future with generations of people who have hope, health and dignity.

A container has been placed in the Narthex to accept donations.

Thank you for supporting our Sunday School children!!



*We have
waited for him,
so that he might
Save Us.*

ISAIAH 25:9. NRSV

Souper Bowl Sunday

February 3rd



Sponsored by
the UEC Youth
Group

This year our UEC Youth Group embraces a spirit of Christian generosity during the Lenten season by supporting "Souper Bowl Sunday." The NFL Super Bowl is Sunday, February 3rd. Did you know that a 30-second commercial during the game costs 2.6 million dollars? It is a day when millions of dollars are spent to enjoy football. It is also a day that we can choose to turn our thoughts and dollars toward those without a bowl of soup to eat by supporting the Souper Bowl of Caring.

The Souper Bowl of Caring is the result of thousands of young people joining together to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities.

On Sunday, February 3rd, the youth of United will be collecting food and monetary donations to alleviate poverty in Baltimore. All donations will go directly to Earl's Place, the charity the youth chose to support. The requested donation is the cost of an average lunch.

Thank you for your support of our Youth Group and their Lenten mission project.

Special Events in March



THE LAST SUPPER

Lord's Supper Tableau
March 19th—8:00 p.m.

It is time to prepare for the Last Supper Tableau. Phone calls are being made to determine who is taking part this year and if any roles are open for new disciples.

If you would like to join this year's Tableau or help "behind the scenes," please contact Arlene Pate @ 410-327-3211.

We appreciate all who are taking part again this year and we anticipate the Tableau will be as memorable as in the past.

Chesapeake Association Leadership Banquet Sunday, March 2nd – 5:30 p.m. at Overhills Mansion

Anyone serving in a leadership position is welcome to attend. If interested, please contact Rev. Cathy for details.

One great hour of sharing.

Sunday, March 2nd

One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering that makes real the love of Christ for

individuals and communities around the world who suffer the effects of disasters, conflict, or severe economic hardship, and for those who serve them through gifts of money and time.

Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing make a difference in the lives of people. Church World Service, a division of the National Council of Churches, with overseas partner churches and church councils are often the first on the scene following a disaster of natural or human origin. Local church leaders identify the needs of their people. Priorities are set to bring long-term solutions that will improve the quality of life for individuals and communities around the world. One Great Hour of Sharing, nearly 50 years old, continues to respond to needs equally critical as when it was first created.

Give Generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.

It is remarkable what you gift will do.



*Love
Them
as You
Love
Yourself*
Matthew 22:39

Points to Ponder...

He Bore My Cross

by *Allison Egley*

I'm a woodworker by trade, though I doubt many people would want my job. I work for the Roman government. I help with the justice system by making sure criminals are given their fair punishment. You see, I make the crosses used in criminal executions. It's not a glamorous job, but someone has to do it. I used to take so much pride in my work. Too much pride, I'd say. I'd watch the executions, satisfied that I had a part in bringing the criminals to justice. There was one case, however, that changed my life.

I remember when the Man came to town. He came in riding on a donkey. The people were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Many claimed this was the promised Messiah. They called Him Jesus. The Man Himself claimed to be the Son of God. I just scoffed. The Messiah? Riding on a donkey? The One to save the nation? I would have thought He'd come in on a horse, or something a bit more, well, majestic than on a lowly donkey.

Some claimed He could heal people. I never witnessed any healings first hand, and I never saw any of those people after they were healed, either. Where was the proof? Besides, they were probably part of His cohort anyway. This Man called Jesus probably planted those invalids to try to convince people He had real power. Please.

This Man did many things that irritated me, but one of them that I couldn't stand was how He blatantly refused to follow some of the Jewish laws: "healing" on the Sabbath, eating with unclean hands, eating with the outcasts, the list goes on and on. Why would the Messiah, or someone who claimed to be the Son of God, not follow the laws His Father put in place? Oh sure, I'll admit, the religious leaders added a few things here and there but nothing significant.

When I heard rumors He would be arrested, I was overjoyed. I knew He'd be found guilty of blasphemy, the severest of crimes. I got right to work on His cross. I purposely didn't sand this one as well as the others I make. I wanted Him to feel every inch of that cross.

The day of His execution finally came. There was the cross I had made, standing on the hill. They brought Jesus to the cross; He had been beaten so badly, I could hardly tell he was even human. Even I turned my head and cringed as I heard the pounding of the hammer against the nails.



As I looked at Him up on the cross, I thought He looked right at me, like He somehow knew of my part in His death. At that moment something changed. I still didn't believe He was who He claimed to be, but I did feel a bit sorry for Him. Even the hardest of criminals doesn't deserve the beating He received, and I wished I had taken the time to sand the cross a bit more.

I wanted to turn away -- to walk home. But I couldn't; something kept me there. The sky darkened, and it was only noon. I stood with my eyes fixed on that cross. I heard the Man speak with a great struggle, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." At first, both criminals were taunting Him, but later, I heard one repent. Then this Jesus said something I'll never forget. He said "you will be with Me in Paradise." Finally, His breathing became labored. I could tell He was near death. With all the energy He had left in Him, He cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

At that moment, a wave of grief and understanding flooded my heart. This Man was the Messiah. With deep sobs, I fell onto the ground and cried out, "Father, forgive me, for I know what I have done."

(cont'd on next page)

Points to Ponder...

He Bore My Cross

(cont'd from previous page)



Jesus did rise from the dead three days later, just as He said. I, along with many others, saw Him. Some people claim that we must have had a mass hallucination. I know what I saw. I still have a memento from the day of His death: a piece of the cross made by my own hands. It's now worn smooth as a constant reminder that my Savior bore my cross for me.

Author's Notes:

Direct quotes in order of appearance:

John 12:13 (NKJV)

Luke 23:34 (NKJV)

Luke 23:43 (NKJV)

Luke 23:46 (NKJV)

Other details from the life of Christ are taken from the four Gospels.

Allison Egley, 2007

Allison resides in St. Peters, MO. She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University in May, 2006 with a degree in Elementary Education. Her other writings are on the FaithWriters website.

<http://www.faithwriters.com/>

[member-profile.php?id=14989](http://www.faithwriters.com/member-profile.php?id=14989)

Article Source:

<http://www.faithwriters.com-CHRISTIAN WRITERS>

The Legend of the Dogwood

There's a legend that the dogwood was once the size of the oak and other forest trees. It was so strong and firm that it was chosen as the timber for Christ's cross. This greatly distressed the tree. Jesus, nailed upon it, sensed the tree's regret and told it:

"Because of your sorrow for my suffering, never again shall the dogwood grow large enough to be used as a cross. It shall be slender, bent and twisted. Its blossoms shall form a cross – two long and two short petals. And at the outer edge of each petal will be nail prints, brown with rust and stained with red. In the center of the flower shall be a crown of thorns. And all who see it will remember"

Lent—A Season for Growth

Many of us know our IQ (intelligence quotient), but what about our SQ (spiritual quotient)?

Lent is a good time to think about the quality of your spiritual life. Do you think about God often ... or rarely? Do you pray often ... or occasionally? How well do you know the Bible? The Commandments? The Beatitudes? The lives of biblical heroes and heroines?

During Lent, commit to spending more time in prayer. Also consider selecting a book of the Bible or a particular Bible character to study in-depth during this period.

Some people give up particular items or habits during Lent. If used wisely, this discipline can help you abandon things that have been interfering with your relationship with God.

Seek out devotions and books that can help strengthen your spiritual life. Examples include: *Show Me the Way* by Henri Nouwen, *A Season for the Spirit* by Martin Smith, *Six Hours One Friday* by Max Lucado, and *Lent and Easter Wisdom From Thomas Merton* edited by Jonathan Montaldo.

Give It Some Thought...



Knowing His Voice

by *Jacquelyn Horne*

Jesus has told us that his sheep know his voice. Do we really listen? Or do we doubt, or miss his voice because the circumstance does not look like God?

Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus, but the Bible says, "their eyes were holden that they should not know him." He began to talk to them, but they did not recognize his voice. What a shame! Such a glorious moment, and they missed it!

Later, when they realized who it was that had walked and talked with them, they chided themselves, "did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?" (Luke 24:32)

Jesus is trying to talk to many of us today, but because our eyes have been blinded, we can't see his directions. We don't recognize his voice. We depend on circumstances to give us direction, when, if we'd listen to his voice, we'd be better off.

I'm told that when a shepherd takes his sheep into the sheepfold, he's not the only shepherd there with sheep. Many shepherds may be using the sheepfold to protect their flocks at night from predators, while they catch a little peaceful sleep.

But when the shepherd of a certain flock of sheep leaves the sheepfold, he merely talks to his sheep with simple words. Perhaps just, "come sheep." But only his flock will follow him out of the sheepfold, because they "know his voice."

God wants his children to be as sensitive to his voice. Most of us are not tuned in like we should be. Maybe we just don't have enough conversations with him to recognize his voice when we hear it.

Reading his Word also helps us to get to know his voice. The more we study his Word and his ways, the more we begin to recognize his voice.

When I write a letter, the person I'm writing to, if they are familiar with me, will know who is writing even if they have not read the signature. They "know my voice" even on paper. They recognize my form of speech and identify with my way of talking.

It's the same way with the Lord. We can know his voice if we begin to identify with his way of speaking. It's really very simple. We make it complicated.

Is God trying to talk to you, and you don't understand because the circumstances seem wrong to you? Is he trying to direct you into a certain path in your ministry, and you don't understand because it's not a "normal" way to do things? Try listening to see if you know his voice. If you recognize his voice, then you can rest assured that it's time to go, it's time to follow the shepherd, no matter what others think.

Before we can walk deeper in the Lord, we've got to spend some time "getting to know him." This will be a great help to us as we continue to walk our Christian walk. Once we know his voice as we should, no one will be able to sway us. We will be that obedient servant that he desires to lead into greater depths with him. And even though it doesn't seem right to the flesh, the spirit of our being will identify with his voice, and we will obey.

Only then, can we truly follow the shepherd into the path where he's leading, no matter what the circumstances dictate.

Jacquelyn Horne is a former newspaper reporter who has won various awards including two Delaware School Bell awards. She has poems and articles published in magazines and Christian publications. She moved from Delaware to central Georgia 13 years ago.

Article Source:
<http://www.faithwriters.com-CHRISTIAN WRITERS>

Bits n' Pieces...



Gotta voice? Want to raise it?

Well here's your chance. Join the church choir and let your voice be heard. If you are confirmation age or older, you can join the choir and sing your heart out!!

See Rob Gundlach, he will be happy to see you and keep you on key!!

Church Handyman Needed



We are in need of a general handyman to make small repairs around the church and school building. The position would be on an "as needed" basis meaning that it would not be an all-day, everyday type position. The job would pay an hourly rate.

If you are interested, or could perhaps recommend someone, please contact the church office or speak with any Church Council member.

REMEMBER?



Set Your
Clocks
Ahead!



Daylight Savings Begins

March 9th

Remember to "spring forward" and turn your clocks ahead one hour.

church e-mail directory

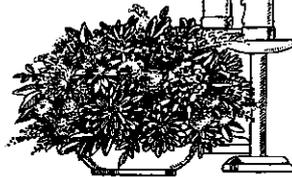


Church E-Mail Directory

The Church Office is compiling e-mail addresses of members for communication purposes. If you have an e-mail address, would you please take a moment and either enter the information on the sign-up sheet in the Narthex, or simply send an e-mail to the church address; uecucc@verizon.net and simply put "e-mail directory" in the subject line.

This directory will only ever be used for UECUCC correspondence and never shared with any organization.

Altar Flowers



The chart for requesting altar flowers is in the Narthex. The offering is \$ 15 per vase.

If you have any questions, please call Ursula Jacob, 410-679-6163.

Coffee Hour

Calling All Coffee Lovers

How about hosting a coffee hour between Sunday morning services. Nothing fancy, just hot water (for coffee) and a few noshes (donuts, cake, etc.) We could sure use a few more volunteers to step up and volunteer to host. You could even buddy-up with someone else and together host an hour.

Sign up sheets are in the Narthex.

Christian Fiction Review



Bethesda

By: Paul Nigro

Publisher: River Oak (2002)
285 pages



*Reviews are written by
the webmaster, Tim Frankovich.*

The second novel by Paul Nigro continues in the same pattern as his first: an intriguing twist on a theme while challenging the modern-day church to get more involved in reaching out to sinners.

Bethesda tells the story of the discovery of a mysterious pool in the basement of a dying church. What makes it mysterious is not only the source of the water, but the fact that the water seems to actually heal people (like the Biblical pool from which the book draws its title).

Pastor Carla Donovan, burned-out and frustrated with both her sleeping congregation and the micro-managing church Board, doesn't know whether this is a genuine miracle, a hoax, or something else. Between threats on her life from a local drug kingpin, family squabbles, pressure from those who want to hide the pool and those who want to publicize it, Carla strives to discover the true history of the church and its pool, a history that unveils more secrets and more mysteries.

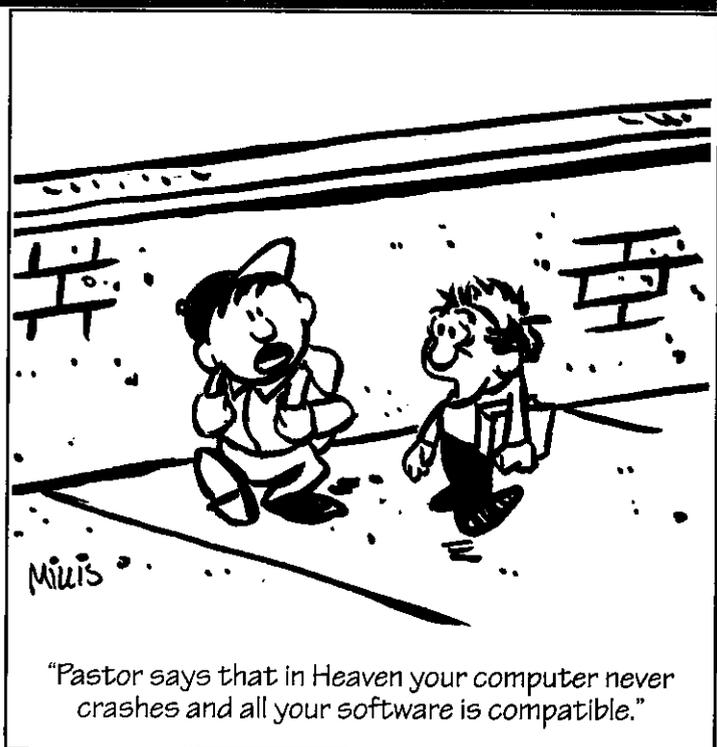
Nigro has refined his style and is developing a stronger writing voice of his own. He seems determined to challenge the church to get out of its four walls and BE Jesus to the community, a theme he emphasized strongly in his first novel, *Q*. *Bethesda* works a little better in that regard, with more "showing" and less "telling."

It seems a little awkward that for the second time, Nigro has chosen to make his main character a single female preacher. While this does open up a lot of potential angst for story-telling purposes, it does repeat the exact same comments on the issue as those used in *Q*. Instead of character development, it comes across more like the author preaching at the readership.

I have to admit that at one twist in the story, I suddenly felt like the main plot had been effectively tossed out completely in favor of various subplots. Fortunately, that didn't last long, and Nigro effectively wove everything back together. The only time the narrative bogged down for me was in a stereotypical "extended family of one ethnic background meets significant other's extended family of different ethnic background" scene. That scene has been standard fare in the movies, at least as far back as Frank Capra, and they're getting old.

Otherwise, *Bethesda* moves along at a rapid pace. I found myself totally engrossed in the mystery of the pool, consuming it as quickly as possible to get the resolution. That, in and of itself, is reason enough to recommend it, but the underlying message to the church as a whole is an important one, as well. Recommended.

Comics Corner

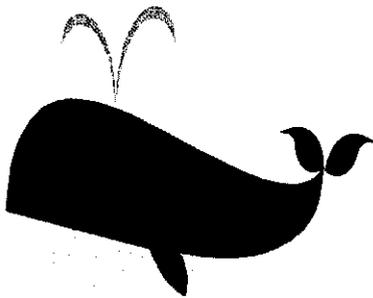


The Secret to a Long Lasting Marriage

My parents married over 50 years, raised a brood of 11 children. Now they enjoy 30 grandchildren. When asked the secret of staying together all that time, my mother replies, "many years ago we made a promise to each other: the first to pack up and leave has to take all the kids."

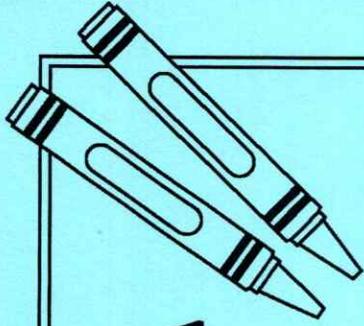
That'll do it!!

A Whale of a Story



A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales, and about Jonah. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal, its throat was very small. The little girl still believed that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah." The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" The little girl replied, "Then you ask him."

Kids Only!!



Just for **KIDS**

For everyone

Every day we should be thankful for God's love and for the gift of his Son, Jesus. Complete the maze below to help people from all directions hear about this good news. Then, starting at the N (north) and going clockwise, read the words to John 3:16, NIV.

Whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that no one who believes in him shall perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16, NIV



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Why do you look for the living among the dead?
He is not here,
but has risen.
Luke 24:5